Exhibit I

INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS

LOCAL 2323

— and —

VERIZON NEW ENGLAND, INC.

AAA #11 300 01115 04

Grievant: Rodney Barber

Hearings were held in the above-referenced case on October 25 and November 18, 2004, in Boston, Massachusetts, before Arbitrator Richard G. Higgins. The hearings were conducted under the rules and auspices of the American Arbitration Association. A post-hearing brief was submitted by each party.

Arbitration Panel:

William C. McGowan
Union-Appointed Arbitrator

Stephen J. Lowrie
Company-Appointed Arbitrator

Richard G. Higgins
Neutral Arbitrator

Appearances for Parties:

Marc P. Gursky, Esq.
Elizabeth Wiens, Esq. (on the brief)
for the Union

Scott C. Merrill, Esq.
for the Company

THE ISSUE

At the initial hearing, the parties stipulated that the Issue in dispute is as follows:

> Was the termination of Rodney Barber for just cause?
>
> If not, what should be the remedy?

(Tr., p. 6)

RELEVANT CONTRACTUAL PROVISIONS

ARTICLE G9
Arbitration

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G9.02 Arbitration shall be conducted through a Board of Arbitration consisting of one (1) representative elected by the Union, one (1) representative selected by the Company, and an impartial chairman mutually chosen by the parties. The procedure for arbitration shall be as follows:

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(e) The decision of a majority of the board shall be the decision of the Board of Arbitration. The Board shall have no power to add to, subtract from, modify or disregard any of the provisions of this Agreement nor shall it have power to establish or determine any new wage rate, job classification or job differential. The decision of the Board, which shall contain a full statement of the grounds upon which the issue or issues are decided, shall be final and binding on the Union and the Company.

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G9.03 (a) If the grievance involves a discharge or disciplinary action, the Board of Arbitration shall determine whether the discharge or disciplinary action was for just cause. If the Board of Arbitration finds that the discharge or disciplinary action was without just cause, the employee shall be reinstated. At the Board's discretion the employee may be granted lost seniority, the employee's basic weekly wage rate for straight time lost, and an additional amount not to exceed ten (10) percent of the former, such amount to be in lieu of all other losses an extensive period of time, had full knowledge that before he went to Las Vegas he was obligated to contact MetLife and get their permission. There is simply no credible basis for this Panel to conclude that Mr. Barber, during the close to one year that he had been on such disability status, chose to keep himself ignorant of his obligations thereunder. While an arbitration panel is always prepared to give some benefit of the doubt when somebody fails to read each and every page of a 34-page Benefit Plan, that benefit of the doubt cannot be extended to someone who has been on that status for that long, especially when the Plan is incorporated into the Collective Bargaining Agreement. The Panel is convinced that Mr. Barber knew he should have contacted MetLife for permission before traveling to Las Vegas. Maybe he put off getting permission because, as he testified, he did not know up until the last minute whether he would feel well enough to go. On the other hand, maybe he felt close enough to the end of his already-approved disability period that he was willing to roll the dice and take his chances. The Panel will never know why Mr. Barber chose not to seek permission to take that trip. The Panel is convinced, however, that he knew full well that he was obligated to seek such permission, and willfully decided not to do so.

This then brings us to the question of how serious Mr. Barber's infraction was. Under a just-cause standard, the punishment must fit the crime. As discussed earlier in the "Discussion," this Panel has no basis to conclude that Mr. Barber's travel negatively affected his medical condition, thwarted his recuperation, or delayed his return to work in any manner. No such assessments were made by MetLife or Verizon, and the Panel is without authority under Article G12.03 to make an independent judgment on those issues.

While the Panel views Mr. Barber's travel as a less-virulent violation than travel which harmed him medically and extended his disability leave, the Panel views his decision to go to Las Vegas as particularly and uniquely flagrant. Mr. Barber has a serious illness. His Company and the Company's claims administrator took his illness seriously and compensated him while he attempted recovery. Mr. Barber's period on disability was lengthy, and no doubt costly to the Company. For him, at the end of that combined lengthy period, to fly to Las Vegas of all places, is such an "in your face" act that it warrants a serious disciplinary response. It would be difficult to create a scenario which would be more corrosive to how other employees view the necessity to follow Plan requirements than was Mr. Barber's decision at the end of a long period of coverage to go to Las Vegas. Mr. Barber was not Maid of Honor at that wedding. He was a disabled employee receiving benefits under a Plan that required him to get permission before he traveled. He owed that to his Company, if for no other reason than that his Company had stood by him over an extended period of time when he needed coverage. His actions were flagrant, and the Panel is convinced they must be viewed in light of the damage that would be done if his discipline did not fit the crime. As noted above, however, the Panel must keep in mind that there is no evidence of any previously existing policy to treat any and all travel without permission while on disability as a gross violation of the Code calling for termination.

Given the above, the Panel is satisfied that there was not just cause for the termination of Mr. Barber. His termination is revoked, and he will be returned to work effective one week from the date of this Award. The period from his termination on January 16, 2004, will be without back pay but with retroactive benefits, except for any accrual of vacation. The period from January 16, 2004, to his reinstatement will be treated as a disciplinary suspension without pay, and the Company may place an appropriate suspension letter in his file.

AWARD

That there was not just cause for the termination of Mr. Barber. His termination is revoked, and he will be returned to work effective one week from the date of this Award. The period from his termination on January 16, 2004, will be without back pay but with retroactive benefits, except for any accrual of vacation. The period from January 16, 2004, to his reinstatement will be treated as a disciplinary suspension without pay, and the Company may place an appropriate suspension letter in his file.

ARBITRATION PANEL:

William C. McGowan Union-Appointed Arbitrator	R. G. Higgins Richard G. Higgins Neutral Arbitrator
Stephen J. Lowrie Company-Appointed Arbitrator	DATED: February 16, 2005